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# Future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development

## Note by the Secretariat

*Summary*

The present note is prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/270 B, in which each functional commission was requested to examine its methods of work, and to Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/11, in which the Council decided that the Commission for Social Development at its forty-fourth session should consider further its methods of work, including, inter alia, the choice of themes for the 2007-2008 cycle. The note presents some background on the review of the methods of work of the Commission, an overview of the modalities of the review and policy sessions, and a proposal for the 2007-2008 substantive theme.

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## Background

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/270 B, requested each functional commission to examine its methods of work in order to better pursue the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. In the same resolution, the Secretary-General was requested to submit a report with recommendations to each functional commission; the commissions were then requested to report to the Council no later than 2005 on the outcome of that examination.

2. At its forty-second and forty-third sessions, the Commission for Social Development considered the reports of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/2004/2 and E/CN.5/2005/2 respectively) on its methods of work. In that context, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2005/11 on the future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development, whereby the Commission would be organized in a series of two-year action-oriented implementation cycles that would include a review segment and a policy segment. That approach follows the work cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which implemented the two-year cycle for its 2004-2005 sessions. The Council also decided that the Commission for Social Development should include in its work a consideration of the nature of its outcomes, the inclusion of emerging issues within its programme of work and the choice of themes for the 2007-2008 cycle.

3. In February 2005, at the forty-third session of the Commission, which commemorated the tenth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development, delegations reaffirmed the primary role of the Commission in follow-up to the Summit and stressed that the outcome of the Commission should have an impact at all levels. In that regard, careful consideration of the role of the Commission was emphasized to ensure its impact and effectiveness, particularly in relation to more action-oriented strategies for national policymakers.

4. Delegations further agreed that more interactive dialogues would enhance the work of the Commission, and that participation continued to be important for all stakeholders, including United Nations funds and agencies, regional commissions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. In its consideration of the biennial programme of work of the Commission, a number of delegations also expressed the view that a review and policy session would allow for more time to reflect on substantive issues.

## Modalities of the review and policy sessions

5. In order to fulfil its mandate, the Commission, beginning with its forty-fifth session in 2007, will organize the first part of its work in a series of two-year action-oriented implementation cycles. In that context, the Council, in its resolution 2005/11, further decided that the Commission should strengthen the connection between its review of implementation and its policy recommendations and that it should emphasize increased exchange of national, regional and international experiences, as well as focused and interactive dialogues among experts and practitioners and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

6. The second part of the work of the Commission will continue to be devoted to its review of plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups, taking into account also the chosen theme of the review and policy sessions.

## A. The review session

7. The first year of the cycle — the review session — will focus on a review of progress or regress in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The first part will be devoted to interactive round tables and panel discussions on the chosen theme, which will be elaborated in a report of the Secretary-General prepared for the review session. The session will include an exchange of regional experiences, dialogues with experts and practitioners, the sharing of best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Social Development and their linkages with the Millennium Development Goals. Participants would be drawn from Governments, academia, civil society and the private sector.

8. The outcome of the review session will be a non-negotiated document in the form of a chairperson's summary. It will identify constraints, obstacles, best practices and possible approaches and will reflect overall progress or regress in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

## B. The policy session

9. The second year — the policy session — will focus on decisions on how to overcome constraints, obstacles and barriers to the implementation process. The first part will be devoted to interactive round tables/panel discussions, followed by a high-level segment, involving ministers or their representatives. A report of the Secretary-General for the policy session will be prepared on the basis of the Chairman's summary of the review session, proposing policy recommendations.

10. The outcome of the policy session will be a negotiated document, which will identify policy options and practical measures intended to facilitate implementation of the Copenhagen commitments.

## C. Future themes

11. It is proposed that each cycle of the Commission address, beginning in 2007 at the forty-fifth session, one of the three core issues of the World Summit for Social Development: eradicating poverty, promoting full employment and fostering social integration. In addition, it is hoped that the focus on a core issue of the Summit over a two-year cycle will enable the Commission to go into greater depth by also addressing related cross-cutting issues, emerging issues and linkages with other issues relevant to the theme under discussion. Such a focus should avoid the danger of relegating the other goals of the Programme of Action to the background.

12. **The priority theme for the forty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development in 2006 is "Review of the first United Nations Decade for the eradication of poverty (1997-2006)" (see E/2005/26-E/CN.5/2005/7, para. 3). Furthermore, by its decision 2005/13, the Council decided that the theme for**

**the high-level segment of its 2006 substantive session would be "Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development". In view of the above, and taking into consideration the recommendation in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (see General Assembly resolution 60/1) to make the goals of full employment and decent work for all a central objective of national and international policies, it is felt that the Commission for Social Development would have an excellent opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the Council on the subject of employment. It is therefore proposed that "Promoting full employment" be considered as the theme for the 2007-2008 cycle.**